

16 November 2006

HRH COUNTESS OF WESSEX VISITS TOMORROW'S PEOPLE

HRH The Countess of Wessex today (Thursday 16 November) visited employment charity Tomorrow's People in Glasgow.

The Countess, who is Tomorrow's People Patron, visited the charity's Working It Out programme which targets some of the hardest to help and most disadvantaged young people in Glasgow. Groups of 16-22 year olds attend a 16 week programme, aimed at helping them develop life-management skills and gain practical work experience through a series of community challenges.

During her visit, the Countess visited a Tomorrow's People Working It Out challenge at St. Dominic's Parish Church, Mossvale Road, Craigend, Glasgow, where the young people have been set a task to redecorate a well-used community hall.

The Countess met Tomorrow's People Chief Executive, Debbie Scott and Brian Gibson, Regional Operations Manager for the North, who explained the role of the charity, which has been helping the unemployed into work for 22 years.

At the church hall, the Countess saw first hand the work of the charity when she met Tomorrow's People Task Force Co-ordinator, Janet Warnock and Task Force Leader, Maggie Kerr. She also met Father Tom McGill (Parish Priest) and Ann Curran, Chairman of the Hall Committee. The Countess also spoke to the young people on the programme.

While thousands of youngsters leave school and move on to college, university or jobs, there are many who leave but with no skills or qualifications, no personal goals or ambitions and little hope of employment.

Without intervention this group can become dependent on benefits, unable to contribute to the society they live in, and in some cases turn to drugs, alcohol and crime.

An evaluation of a Working It Out pilot was conducted by the New Economics Foundation in 2004/5, which found that:

- for every £1 invested in Working it Out, the return to society was trebled to £3.
- This social return on investment came from reduced welfare costs, increased tax take and reduced costs for the criminal justice system.



Brian Gibson, Tomorrow's People Regional Operations Manager for the North said:
"Through Working it Out we have transformed the lives of many of Glasgow's disadvantaged young people.

"So many leave school with no qualifications and no idea what they want do with their lives. And some are likely to have very troubled histories, suffering from physical mistreatment, drug or alcohol abuse, low basic skills or mild learning disabilities.

"At Tomorrow's People we are trying to break this cycle of exclusion by opening doors for young people that otherwise would remain closed, making them aware of their abilities and personal qualities, and providing them with the support and guidance to identify and achieve personal goals and succeed in their own terms."

Debbie Scott, Chief Executive of Tomorrow's People added: "We are extremely grateful for the support that HRH Countess of Wessex provides in her capacity as Patron of Tomorrow's People and we are delighted to welcome her to see first hand this innovative project."

Working It Out is funded by the European Social Fund, Glasgow City Council, FARE (Family Action in Rogerfield and Easterhouse), EQUIP, and The Laidlaw Youth Project. Working it Out was in fact one of the first initiatives to receive funding from The Laidlaw Youth Project, set up by Lord Laidlaw of Rothiemay, to help vulnerable young people in Scotland.

Tomorrow's People has been operational in Scotland since 1984 and has run a number of highly successful programmes targeting the hardest to help from its offices at Holmfauld Road, Govan, Glasgow.

Tomorrow's People is a national charitable trust that helps people out of long-term unemployment, welfare dependence or homelessness, into jobs and self-sufficiency. It has helped change the lives of more than 400,000 people across the UK who had been resigned to long-term, even life-long, unemployment, since it was established in 1984. On average, 76% of people helped by Tomorrow's People are still in employment 12 months on.

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